

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 04003 301630Z
ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 A-01 IO-13
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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7515

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 4003

RIO FOR USDEL SECRETARY

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE

STATE PASS WHITE HOUSE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S SPEECH IN NIGERIA

REF: LAGOS 3753 #

1. WE HOPE THAT IT IS NOT TOO LATE FOR THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL
SUGGESTION CONCERNING POSSIBLE CHANGE IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH
TO BE DELIVERED IN LAGOS.

2. IN PARAGRAPH 35, REPLACE THE LAST SENTENCE REGARDING "TWO
FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS" WITH THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE: "AN
IMPRESSIVE SERIES OF LOCAL ELECTIONS ACROSS THE NATION PRODUCED
THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY THAT IS NOW LAYING THE GROUNDWORK
FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE IN 1979".

3. THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR OUR PROPOSED CHANGE IS THAT
THE REFERENCE TO "TWO" ELECTIONS IS APT TO BE CONFUSING TO THE
NIGERIAN AUDIENCE. IN THE PAST YEAR, AS A PART OF THE REFORM
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OF THE ENTIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM, ELECTIONS WERE HELD
ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES.
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS THUS ELECTED THEN CHOOSE THE
MEMBERS OF THE CURRENTLY SITTING CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. IN
THE EARLY SIXTIES, ELECTIONS WERE ALSO HELD ON VARIOUS LEVELS.
IN ADDITION, THERE IS NO NEED TO COMPLIMENT THE FMG WITH
THE USE OF THE ADJECTIVE "COURAGEOUS". THE AVERAGE NIGERIAN

CIVILIAN VIEWS THIS DECISION AS HAVING BEEN MUCH OVERDUE
AND MORE THE PRODUCT OF NECESSITY THAN
MORE LAUDABLE MOTIFICATIONS. ONE OF THE MAJOR REASONS FOR
GOWON'S OVERTHROW IN '75 WAS HIS PROCRASTINATION ON JUST
THIS ISSUE.
EASUM

NOTE BY OC/T: #REFTEL BELIEVED TO BE LAGOS 3953.

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NNN

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